

Application No. 09/988,492
Response dated October 27, 2004
Reply to Notice of October 21, 2004

REMARKS

Status Of Application

Claims 1, 4-9, 12-15, 17-21, and 24-31 are allowed in the application.

The Notice indicates that drawings filed on February 21, 2002 have been received, and that an inconsistency exists between the drawings of February 21, 2002 and the Brief Description of the Drawings in the specification. However, no drawings (formal nor corrected) for this application (09/988,492) were filed on February 21, 2002.

While the Image File Wrapper indicates that nine sheets of drawings were submitted on February 21, 2002, these drawings are properly associated with Serial No. 09/855,371, filed May 15, 2001, and not with the instant application.

On February 4, 2002, Applicants mailed an Information Disclosure Statement, citing Higashino, U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/855,371. This Information Disclosure Statement, which was received by the Patent Office on February 21, 2002, contained the complete specification, including the drawings, of co-pending Application Serial No. 09/855,371.

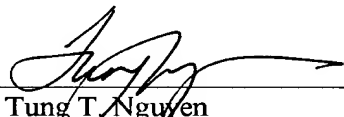
Applicants believe that the Publishing Division has mistaken the drawings of Application Serial No. 09/855,371 for that of the instant application (Serial No. 09/988,492). Indeed, the formal drawings associated with the instant application (Serial No. 09/988,492) were filed with the original application on November 20, 2001 and since then have not been corrected or modified. Further, the Notice of Allowability mailed July 30, 2004, indicated that the "drawings filed on 20 November 2001 are accepted by the Examiner." Thus, the drawings that are properly associated with the instant application are those filed on November 20, 2001.

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The drawings of November 20, 2001 do not contain figures 15A-B, 16A-B, 17 or 18A-B. Thus, there is no inconsistency between the drawings of the instant application (which were filed on November 20, 2001) and the Brief Description of the Drawings in the specification, and no correction by Applicants is necessary.

Any fee required by this document other than the issue fee, and not submitted herewith should be charged to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260. Any refund should be credited to the same account.

Respectfully submitted,

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